



No. 2

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XENOZOIC TALES[®]



MARK CHAMBERS
© 1987

PRECAMBRIAN TIME

PERIOD
CAMBRIAN
ORDOVICIAN
SILURIAN
DEVONIAN
MISSISSIPPIAN
PENNSYLVANIAN
PERMIAN
TRIASSIC
JURASSIC
CRETACEOUS
TERTIARY
QUATERNARY

MILLIONS OF
YEARS AGO

570

500

435

410

360

330

290

240

205

140

65

2

0

Some think the seeds of the Cenozoic's cataclysmic demise were sown as early as the eighteenth century. What is known is that by 1987 A.D., the series of geological upheavals that would signal the unprecedented fall of an era had already begun.

Although the enormous pattern and unfortunate cause behind the global catastrophe would not be discovered until many years later, by the early twenty-first century, mankind had begun its retreat from an increasingly inhospitable surface to the safety of vast subterranean shelters.

By 2020 A.D., the churning, spitting Earth came to a boil. Billions died and entire species were consumed. The few surviving humans huddled in their scattered iron and steel tombs and waited...

Four hundred and fifty years after it had sealed itself off, mankind returned to the daylight, and was greeted by a radically altered world...A world that logically should not exist...A world fully populated by an unprecedented, eclectic ecosystem!

Now, come with us through beauty and terror, mystery and paradox. Come with us to the...

XENOZOIC ERA

Editor
DAVE SCHREINER
Letters
DENISE PROWELL

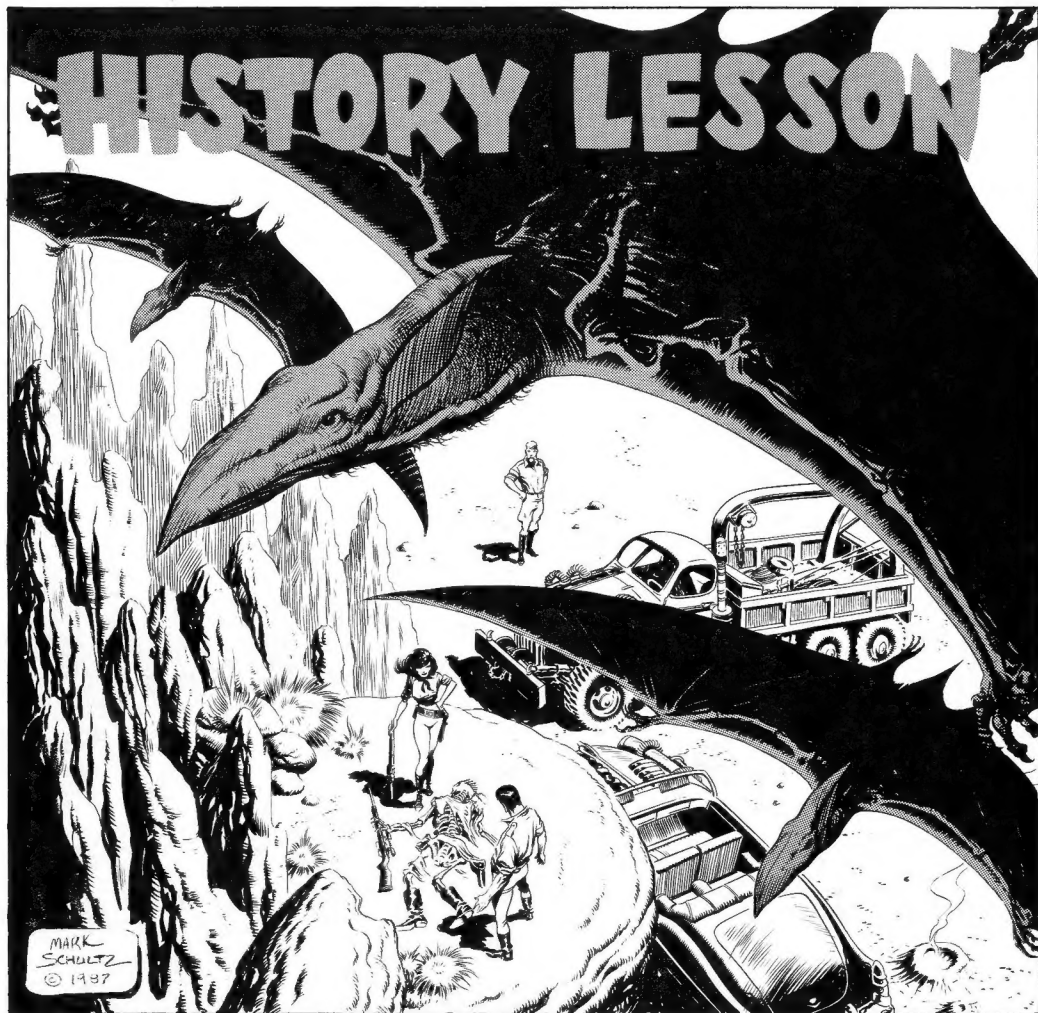
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XENOZOIC TALES No. 4, November 1987. Published by Kitchen Sink Press, Inc., No. 2 Swamp Rd., Princeton WI 54968. Entire contents copyright © 1987 by Mark Schultz. All rights reserved. Any resemblance to any person living or dead is unintentional. Price: \$2.00 U.S.; \$2.80 Canada. **Letters:** As all you indicia readers know, we *love* getting good letters to print. So why haven't you written? **Retailers:** contact us for distribution information. **Collectors and readers:** Write us for free catalog of our other fine books, magazines, comics, posters, buttons, etc. available. If you need back issues of *Xenozoic Tales*, we got 'em. **Watch for Issue No. 5** in March, 1988, in which Jack and Hannah travel beneath the waves, and Silurian fishes greet them with open jaws. Printed in U.S.A.



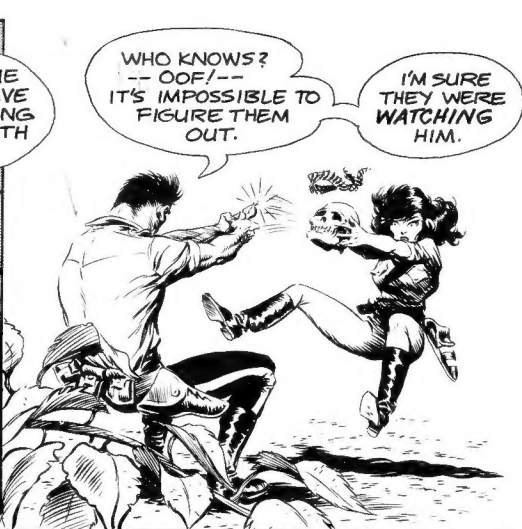
SPECIAL THANKS TO VINCE RUSH, SUSAN WAGNER, AND DENISE FOR ASSISTS.



PULL.

NO SIGN OF A STRUGGLE... I THINK THE SUN GOT TO HIM AND HIS ROTTEN HEART GAVE OUT.

COULD THE GRITH HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH IT?



WHO KNOWS? -- OOF!-- IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO FIGURE THEM OUT.

I'M SURE THEY WERE WATCHING HIM.



GET HIS BOOTS, WILL YA?

THEY CERTAINLY ARRANGED TO KEEP US FROM STUMBLING INTO HIS TRAP.



THERE'S SO MUCH THE GRITH COULD TELL US... SO MANY MYSTERIES THEY COULD CLEAR UP. HOW DO I GET IN TOUCH WITH THEM?

THEY ALWAYS GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU.



HOPE SHE STILL STARTS...

WHAT A HONEY!

JACK... DON'T YOU EVER WONDER ABOUT WHERE ALL THE SLITHERS CAME FROM? THEY DIDN'T EXIST BEFORE THE CATACLYSM, YOU KNOW.

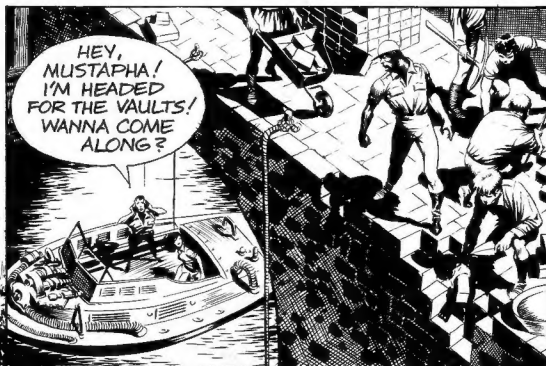
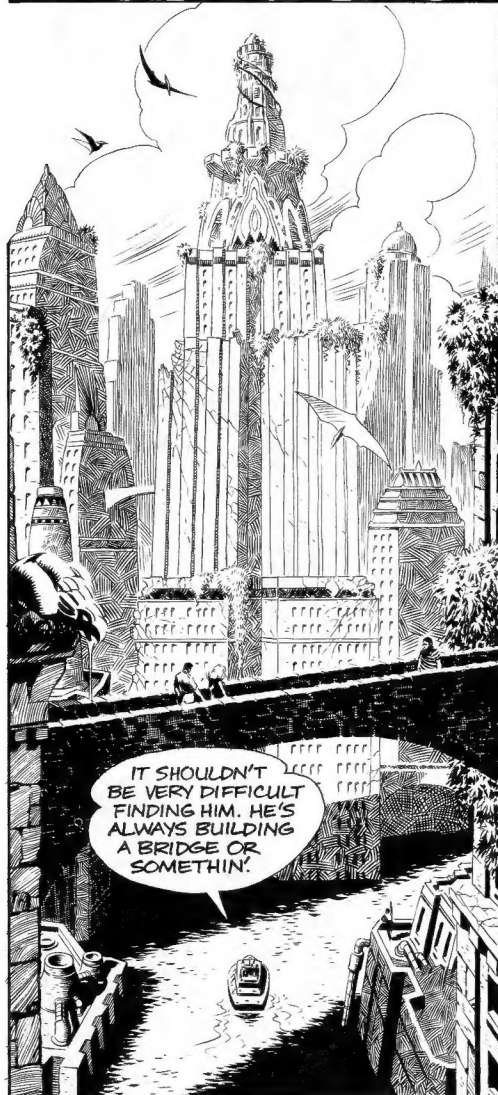
SO WHAT? HOW DOES THAT AFFECT ME? HOW DOES THAT HELP FEED THE TRIBE?





I WARN YOU...
GETTING THERE
ISN'T EASY.

BUT FIRST WE GOTTA
PICK UP MUSTAPHA CAIRO.
HE'S BEEN WAITING FOR ME
TO MAKE THIS TRIP.







YOU KNOW THAT'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH! **NOBODY** GETS THROUGH WITHOUT THE COUNCIL'S APPROVAL...CERTAINLY NOT A WASSOON...



HOLD ON... **YOU** KNOW I HAVE TO ATTEND TO THE PUMPS DOWN THERE, THEY NEED ATTENTION **NOW** AND THE WASSOON'S ASSISTING ME.



SO GO RUN AND TELL THE COUNCIL IF YOU MUST. JUST LET ME DO MY JOB.



YOU'RE SOMETHIN' ELSE, MUSTAPHA.



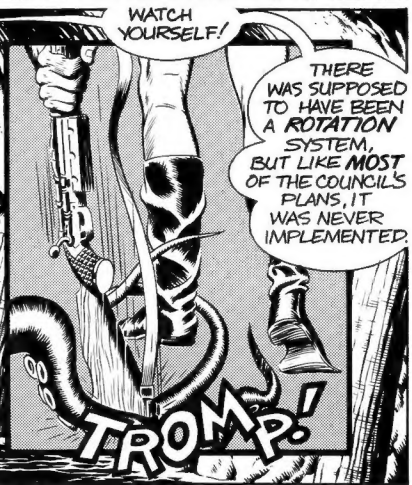
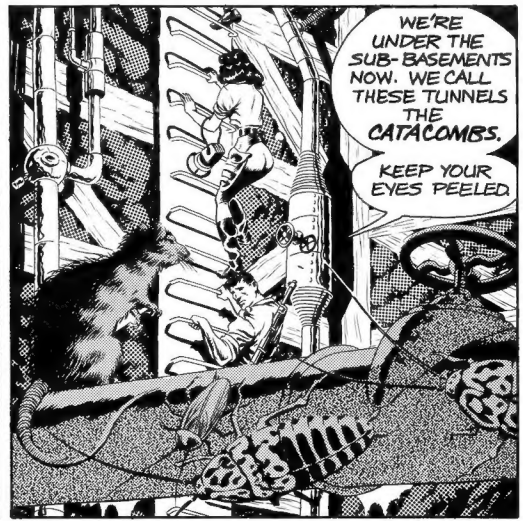
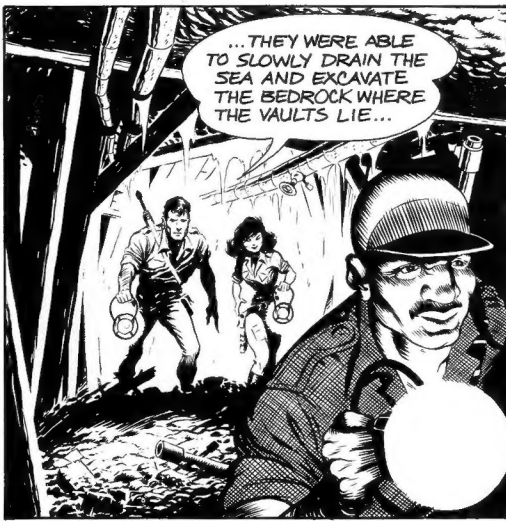
WE'RE BELOW SEA LEVEL NOW...

THE FIRST PUMPS ARE JUST UP AHEAD.



WHEN OUR FATHERS LEFT THEIR **GREAT SHELTERS** AND RETURNED TO THE CITY THEY BROUGHT WITH THEM A MAP TO THE **TREASURE VAULTS** FAR BENEATH THIS TOWER.

BY BUILDING A SERIES OF GEOTHERMAL PUMPS...









THINK
THIS'LL KEEP
YOU BUSY?



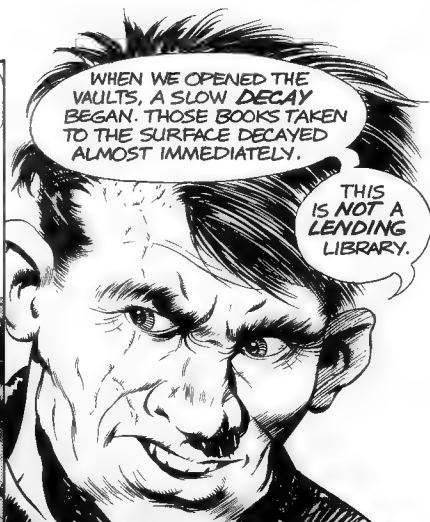
FERRIS HERE WILL
BE YOUR...UH... **GUIDE**.
REMEMBER TO BEHAVE...
YOU'RE A GUEST.

I'LL BE BACK
IN A COUPLE
OF HOURS.



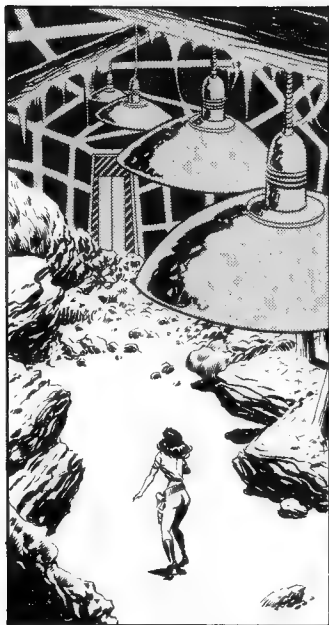
WHAT
DYA WANNA
SEE?

LATE
TWENTIETH
CENTURY
HISTORY...

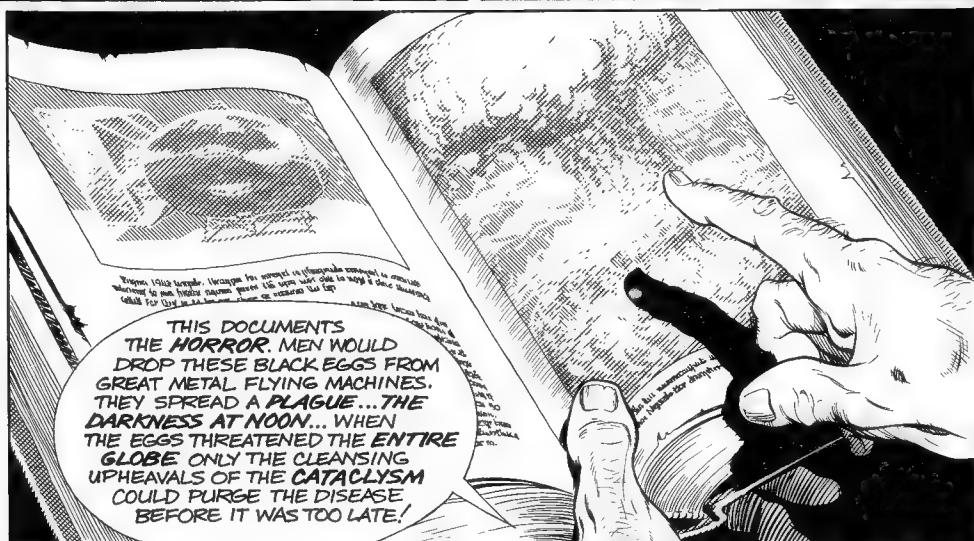


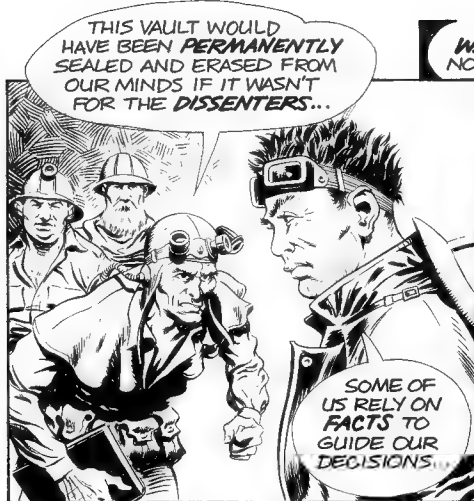












THIS VAULT WOULD HAVE BEEN **PERMANENTLY** SEALED AND ERASED FROM OUR MINDS IF IT WASN'T FOR THE **DISSENTERS...**

SOME OF US RELY ON **FACTS** TO GUIDE OUR DECISIONS...



WELL, WHATEVER IT **WAS**, IT CAN'T HURT ANYTHING NOW. IT'S BEEN DISASSEMBLED. IT'S JUST A **SHELL**. STILL, QUITE A **FIND**.

THIS GOES **BEYOND** SCIENCE, CAIRO! CAN'T YOU FEEL THE **EVIL**?



THIS **SHOULD** HAVE BEEN DESTROYED IN THE CATAclySM, BUT BY SOME FREAK IT **SURVIVED**! IT MUST BE **SHUNNED**!

SUPERSTITIOUS FOOL! IT'S HARMLESS! WE CAN **LEARN** FROM IT...



USHIJIMA'S RIGHT, JACK. THIS VAULT'S A **TROVE** OF NEW INFORMATION.

I... I DON'T KNOW, MUSTAPHA. MAYBE THE **OTHERS** ARE RIGHT. I **CAN** FEEL THE **EVIL** ...RADIATING...

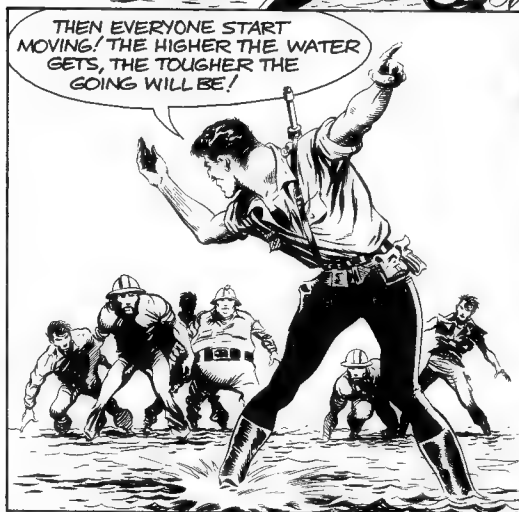


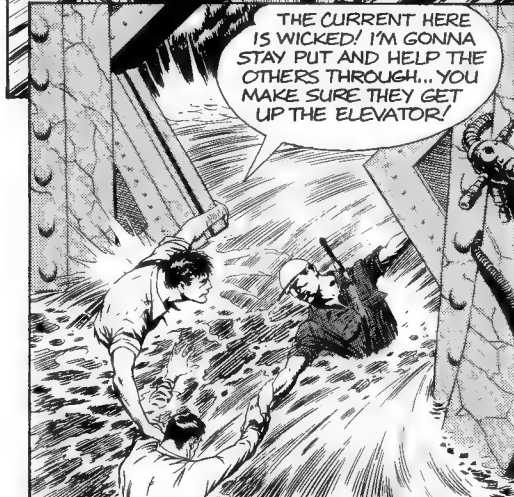
FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD, JACK! **MEN** ARE EVIL, NOT **MACHINES**! THIS MAY BE **INVALUABLE**!

BUT WHY PLAY WITH FIRE?... WE DON'T NEED...



UH, OH... I THINK THIS DISCUSSION MAY BE **MOOT**...







THOOOM!



WHY, HANNAH?

THE BOOKS, JACK. THEY'RE OUR ONLY DIRECT LINK...

YOU'D RISK YOUR LIFE... OUR LIVES... FOR A ROOM FULL OF PAPER?!



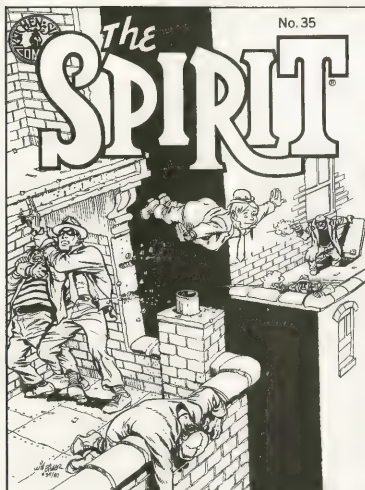
HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND, HANNAH... BUT I DO...



AND SOMEDAY WE'LL PUMP THIS OUT AND OPEN UP AGAIN.

THE END

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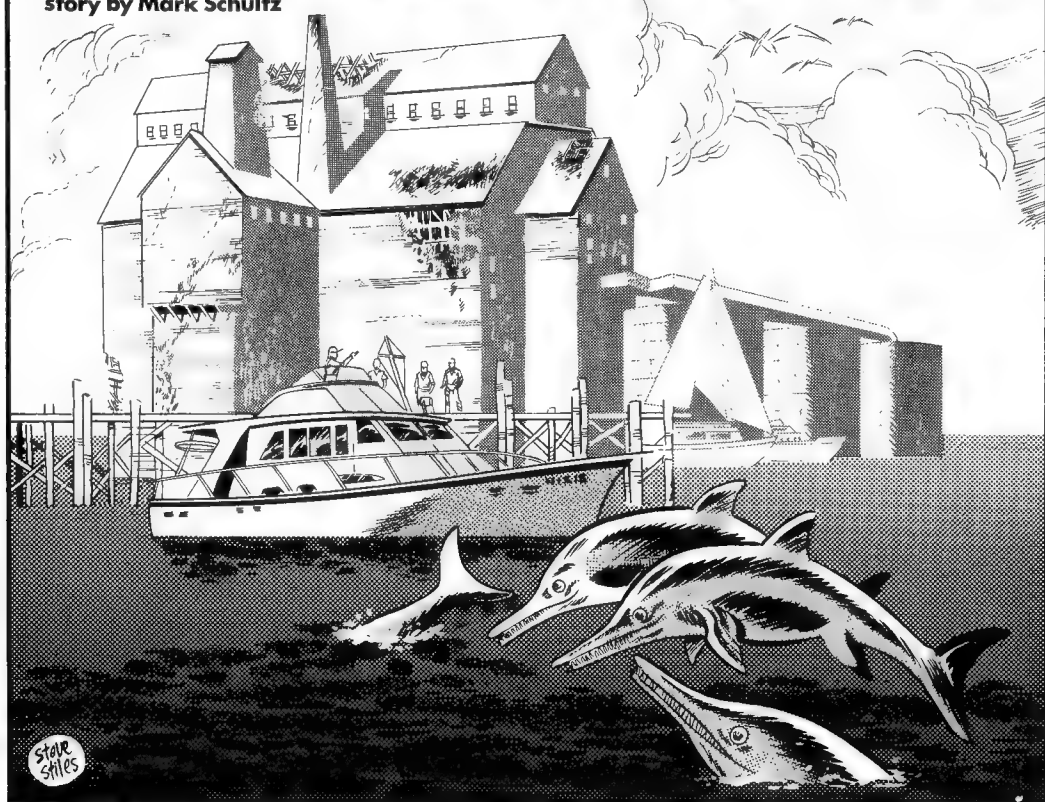
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AS HE DID EVERY MORNING AT 0700 HOURS, LATIMER ROWE EASED HIS AGING PACKET TO DOCKSIDE, AND, AS HAPPENED EVERY DAY, HIS FOUR CARRIERS STOOD READY TO RECEIVE THE INCOMING MAIL. IT WAS **IMPORTANT** THAT THEIR DAYS BEGIN AND END ALIKE, WITHOUT DEVIATION. STEADY RELIABILITY WAS THE NAME OF THE GAME, FOR THESE MEN REPRESENTED THE **CITY IN THE SEA'S...**

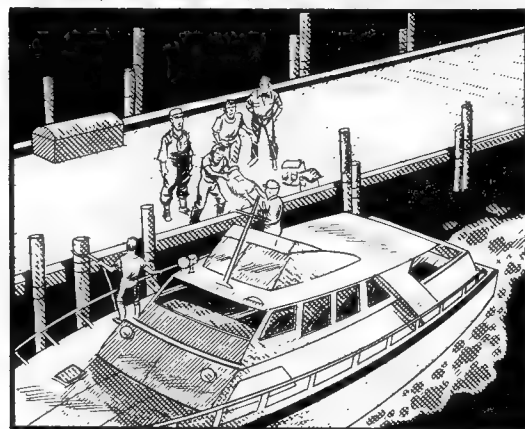
POSTAL SERVICE

story by Mark Schultz



EVEN WITH ROWE'S PERPETUAL EARLY STARTS, THERE WAS VERY LITTLE TIME FOR HIM TO COMPLETE HIS COASTAL CIRCUIT, WHICH INCLUDED OUTPOSTS, SETTLEMENTS, JACK TENREC'S GARAGE...

...AND THE EXPERIMENTAL FARMS.



BIG EUSTACE OPSU GRAVELY TOOK THE REPORT AND PLACED IT WITH GENTLE CARE IN THE POUCH FILLED WITH OTHER MAIL BOUND FOR THE COUNCIL.



BIG, SLOW, DEPENDABLE EUSTACE, SINGLE-MINDED IN THE DETERMINED EXECUTION OF HIS DUTY, HIS HUGE BOOTS BEAT OUT A CADENCE THAT WOULD REMAIN ROCK STEADY THROUGHOUT THE DAY.



SO, WITH THE ONE SLENDER TELEGRAPH CABLE TO THE COAST DISRUPTED AS OFTEN AS NOT...



THEN HE PLODDED OFF TO FAITHFULLY BEGIN HIS DAILY ROUND.



IN THIS WILD ERA, A TRUSTWORTHY SYSTEM OF COMMUNICATION IS A VITAL NECESSITY.

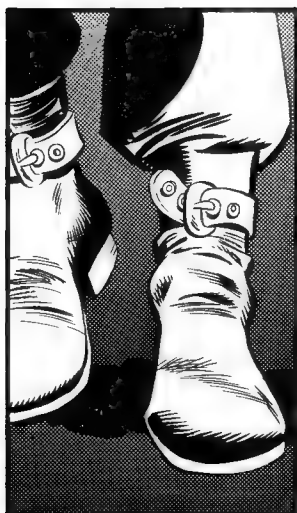


AND THE ONLY CONSISTENT QUALITY OF RADIO BEING ITS INCONSISTENCY...



...THE GOVERNORS HAD CREATED THE POSTAL SERVICE, ON WHICH THE CITY DEPENDED.

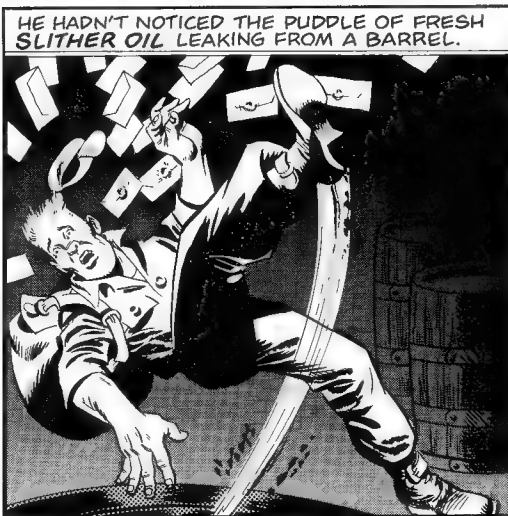




WITH THE ENDURANCE AND INEVITABILITY OF A GIANT MACK ROAMING THE PLAINS, HE TRUDGED FORWARD AND MADE HIS DELIVERIES.



UNTIL...



HE HADN'T NOTICED THE PUDDLE OF FRESH SLITHER OIL LEAKING FROM A BARREL.



HE WAS STUNNED. IT WASN'T THE FALL THAT UPSET HIM...



IT WAS THE SIGHT OF THE LETTERS, *HIS* LETTERS, SCATTERED AND STICKING IN OIL!

THIS WAS ALL WRONG! THIS MUST NOT HAPPEN! A BUCKLE... A POUCH BUCKLE MUST HAVE SNAPPED! OR HAD HE NEGLECTED TO SECURE ONE?



EUSTACE CLEANED THE ENVELOPES AS BEST HE COULD. HE KNEW THAT THE UNREFINED SLITHER OIL, EXPOSED TO AIR, WOULD SOON TURN STICKY.



THEN HE REALIZED THAT THESE LETTERS WERE BOUND FOR THE COUNCIL!



WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE *THAT* POUCH?



FIGHTING PANIC, EUSTACE SEARCHED EVERY NOOK AND CRANNY SURROUNDING THE OIL SLICK...

...UNTIL HE WAS SATISFIED THAT NONE WERE LEFT.



YET SOMETHING NAGGED AT HIS MIND. *SOMETHING* WAS NOT QUITE RIGHT.



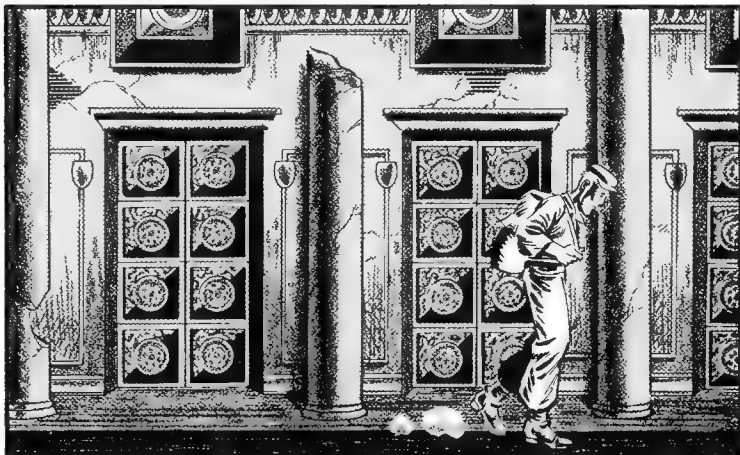
HE RESUMED HIS ROUNDS WITH THE GROWING FEAR THAT THIS TIME, HE HAD FAILED IN HIS DUTY.



DURABLE BOOTS NOW SEEMED TO MARK A MOURNFUL METER.



HE DROPPED OFF THE COUNCIL'S POST OUTSIDE THE CHAMBERS AND FLED, GREATLY EMBARRASSED TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE SOILED ENVELOPES.



TIRELESS FEET AND SOLID LEGS CARRIED HIM EFFORTLESSLY THROUGH THE REST OF THE DAY.



BUT SOMETHING CONTINUED TO TORMENT THE DARK CORNERS OF HIS MIND HE DECIDED IT WOULD BE BEST TO REPORT HIS SPILL TO POSTMASTER ROWE.



HE FOUND ROWE OTHERWISE OCCUPIED.

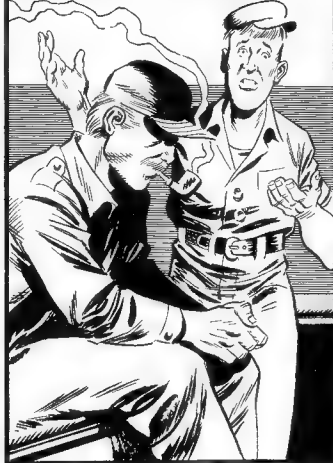




EUSTACE TOLD ROWE THE STORY AS BEST HE COULD... ABOUT HIS TUMBLE...

...ABOUT THE SCATTERED LETTERS, ABOUT THEIR RETRIEVAL...

...AND ABOUT HIS REALIZATION THAT THE DAMAGE REPORT WAS NOT AMONG THEM.





THEY SEARCHED FOR THE MISSING LETTER ALL THROUGH THAT NIGHT, FIRST AT THE SCENE OF EUSTACE'S ACCIDENT...



...AND THEN ALONG EVERY SQUARE INCH OF HIS ROUTE.

ROWE SEARCHED METHODICALLY...

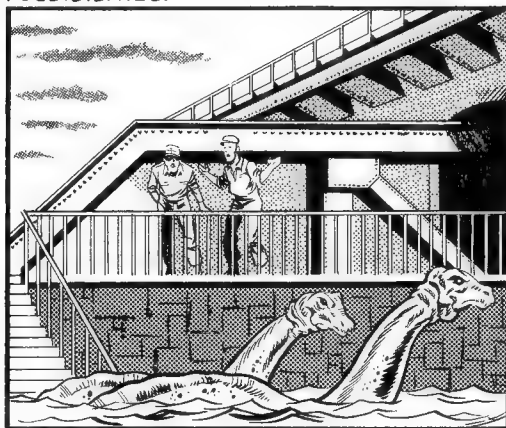


...EUSTACE DESPERATELY...

ROWE WITH GROWING WEARINESS, EUSTACE TIRELESSLY...



AS DAWN APPROACHED, ROWE CALLED IT OFF. HE KNEW IT WAS HOPELESS... THERE WAS NO WAY THEY COULD COVER **ALL** THE POSSIBILITIES.



EUSTACE WOULD HAVE CONTINUED, HIS FEET AND LEGS WERE **IRON**. BUT ROWE ORDERED HIM HOME TO REST BEFORE THE DAY'S ROUNDS BEGAN AGAIN.



FOR EUSTACE IT WAS A GREAT TRAGEDY. HE HAD FAILED HIS DUTY!



HE TRUDGED HOME, HEART BROKEN, NOT CARING WHERE HE STEPPED, NO LONGER RELIABLE...



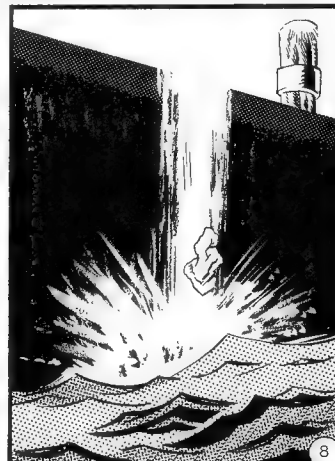
AS HE SLOSHED THROUGH A GUTTER, A THIN, SOILED RECTANGLE SCRAPED LOOSE FROM THE LAYER OF SCUMMY OIL ON THE SOLE OF HIS BOOT.



UNSEEN, IT RODE THE STREAM UNTIL IT RETURNED TO THE WATERFRONT...



...WHERE IT WASHED OVER THE EDGE AND INTO THE SEA BELOW.



XENOZOIC EXPRESS



GREATEST HITS

Xenozoic Tales is like a greatest hits collection of comics. It's a treat to see a well-chosen Will Eisner high angle, an artfully rendered Al Williamson landscape, and a funny Frazetta silhouette in one comic. Mark Schultz knows how to tell a story visually. The sequence when Hannah Dundee encounters the Grith in #3 is masterful—the creature's hypnotic eyes, Hannah's submission, the eerie cavern, Jack's appearance, and the surprise that the fearsome Grith are good guys and that it is an honor to be chosen by them.

The stories are suspenseful, sexy and funny. The 50's fantasy feel is enhanced by the short story format. *XT* is pure comics, but I would be interested to know if Mark Schultz has any literary or cinematic influences.

Eric Nash

187 E. 7th St., NY 10009

BIG QUESTIONS

The big question for any new comic is whether or not it can keep up the momentum and the quality after the first couple of issues, and whether it can improve afterward. The third issue of *Xenozoic Tales* proves that this is one comic that's going to have no trouble fulfilling those criteria. This was an excellent issue. Already, Mark's art is clearly getting even better (not that I had any complaints first time around), developing a wonderful grasp of human expression and posture. This is a perfect example of how to use pictures to tell a story, something many more experienced artists are not so good at. The writing too is growing in stature, with more new ideas to flesh out the already created background world cropping up every page. I hope that Jack's seemingly extra-normal abilities, or "instincts," are not all explained too quickly. But having said that, the appearance of the Grith was a brilliant and logical explanation.

Jack's relationship with Hannah is fated to continue and prosper, despite what they both may think they want, although I'm sure that they know deep down that this wouldn't be such a bad thing. They're just worried that becoming closer is too easy and natural an answer to being thrown together. Hannah certainly is an attractive and sexy woman, as well as being an intriguing one, and Jack could do much

worse, by the looks of things. Meanwhile, the background attempts at treaties and deals, with everyone, naturally, trying to get as much as they can for as little outlay as they can manage, serves as a counterfoil and parallel to what we're shown as the main action.

One thing I have to ask is, was having a different penciller on the second story planned, or due to Mark's not having enough time? If Mark is in fact being pushed for deadlines and "fill-ins" are required,

then that's one bad sign, but if all is going to plan then there's nothing to worry about.

Malcolm Bourne

87 Greenfield Garden, Cricklewood, London NW2 1HU
England

Having Steve Stiles both pencil and ink a second story grew out of a time crunch, but we don't regard his work as "fill-in" type material. On the whole, everything is going to plan, in your words, except time is always a premium, and sometimes the shipping of stories gets messed up. Read this month's announcements below for both a detailed and extremely boring explanation about our publication schedule change, and a harrowing tale of lost and found art.

Why This Issue Is Late

Although Mark Schultz's careful approach to his art has necessitated a schedule change for *Xenozoic Tales* next year (see announcement below), that isn't the entire reason this issue is late. A major reason is that the 20 pages of original art for Mark's story in this issue had been lost for three weeks by an overnight courier service. On Oct. 29, while on a short vacation in Canada, Mark finished the story and went to a Purolator office in Peterborough, Ontario, to send the story to us next day air. Until Nov. 18, that was the last anyone had seen of "History Lesson." Apparently, the package did not have enough documentation to pass through Customs. Specifically, there was no Canadian return address and Mark did not have his signature on the label. Ontario had assured Mark that the label was correct, and there would be no problem, but the problems were only beginning. The package went to Dayton, Ohio, and was turned back. Then, over that weekend, Purolator of Canada and Purolator in the U.S. severed all ties and in the reorganization shuffle, the package was lost and no one would claim any responsibility for it. Pressure was applied constantly both from Mark's and our ends, until finally, the art was found in Wilmington, Ohio (who knows how it wound up there) and sent to us. After waiting three weeks for our next day air package, we at last were able to print the original art. We had been on the verge of printing photocopies.

Schedule Change for '88

Beginning with issue 5, *Xenozoic Tales* will go on a quarterly schedule, with #5 coming in February. The reason for the change from bi-monthly to quarterly is that Mark Schultz has been having trouble meeting that arbitrary deadline. As readers of this title know, Schultz lavishes much painstaking detail on each panel he draws, and rather than hurry him along, we thought we'd make life a little easier for the guy and go to a quarterly schedule. Since each issue of *Xenozoic Tales* is self-contained, the normal pain and agony of waiting for the next number should be alleviated somewhat. Each specific book will still tell complete stories. Readers will not have to wait three months for the conclusion of a story, although they'll have to wait that long for the *next* story. In addition, we've got some surprises in store for the title in 1988, which we're not ready to announce yet, but which will, we know, both thrill you and chill you!

Next Issue:

In February's issue 5 of Mark Schultz's *Xenozoic Tales* Hannah teaches Jack about new and different food sources.

Jack has to erase some cultural beliefs and Hannah has to be patient. They both have to be nimble, because in the *Xenozoic*, your food source might consider returning the favor...

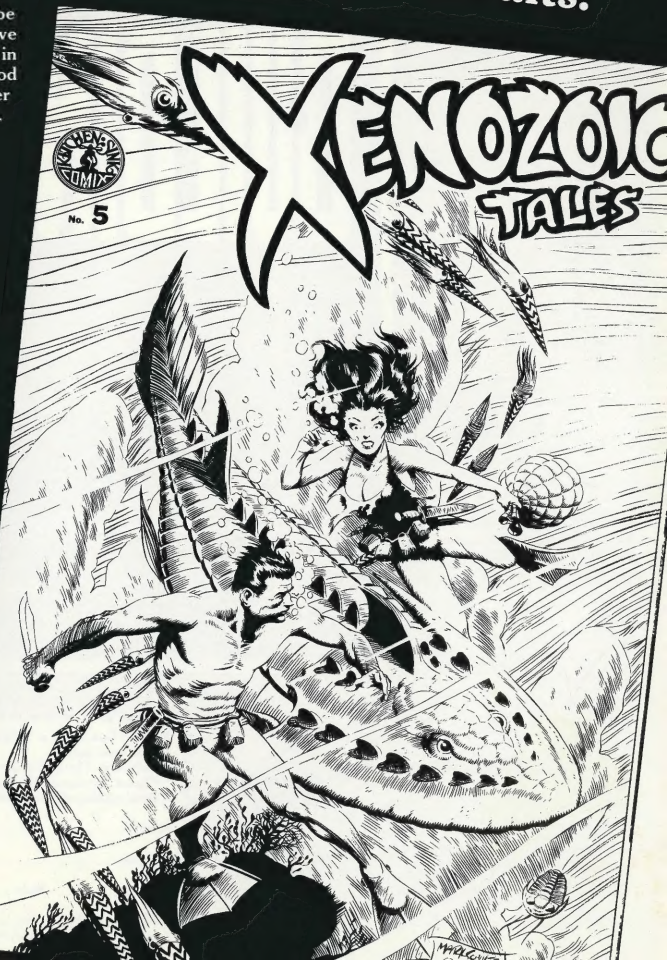
In February!

Down below,
danger awaits!

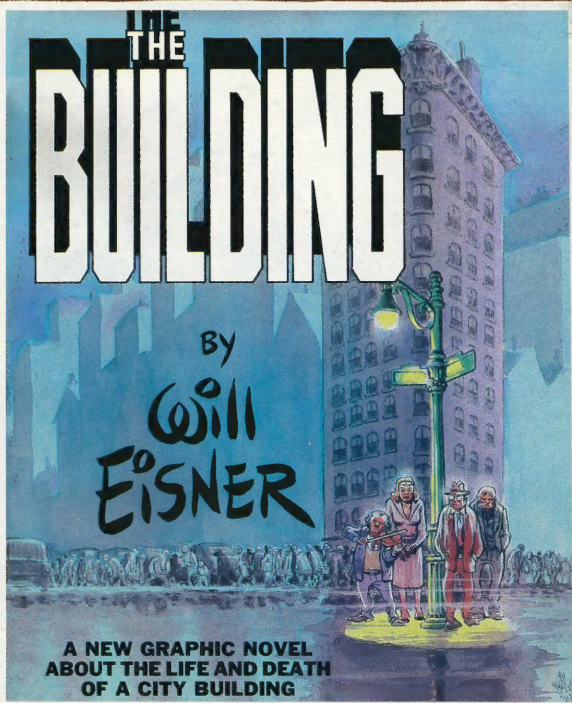


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